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A

CHARGE TO THE CLERGY

OF THE

Diocese of Fredericton

DELIVERED AT HIS EIGHTH TRIENNIAL VISITATION

IN THE CHURCH OF

ST. PAUL'S, PORTLAND, ST. JOHN

June 30, 1868

BY

JOHN, BISHOP OF FREDERICTON.

London

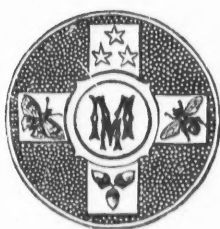
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1868

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PRINTERS TO THE UNIVERSITY.

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TO THE CLERGY OF THE DIOCESE.

M.A.,

I may be allowed to thank you, dear Brethren, for your unanimous wish that I should print my Charge, and for your handsome offer to bear the expense of it. I am fully aware that this offer does not bind you to the adoption of every opinion contained in it, but it shows the great interest which you take in the subject; and I am pleased to add that this interest is shared by the laity, many of whom requested me to read a considerable part of it again to them at a large meeting assembled for the promotion of objects connected with the welfare of our Church.

J. F.

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NOTICE.

THE Bishop of Fredericton's Charge is printed in this country at the request of many whose judgment is entitled to respect.

I am desired by the Bishop to say, that though his Lordship did not attend the Lambeth Conference, yet that he fully concurs in the desirableness of summoning such an assembly, as a measure not only justifiable, but wise and provident; while at the same time he could have wished for a more definite arrangement of subjects ripe for discussion.

J. WILKINSON.

BROUGHTON GIFFORD, *Oct.* 1868.

A CHARGE TO THE CLERGY

OF THE

DIOCESE OF FREDERICTON.

REVEREND AND DEAR BRETHREN,

We must be sadly indifferent to the calls of God's Providence, if the death of four of our small number of clergy, within a very short time, does not impress us to-day with a solemn sense of duty.

Two of those taken from us were men of marked ability in various ways, and will be much missed in their several spheres of influence; and one of those removed from us, though of a less keen intellect, was a rare instance of childlike simplicity and guilelessness of character. May they all 'find mercy of the Lord in that day.'

As the younger clergy may not feel so acutely as the elder that this heavenly call demands of them without delay 'to set their house in order,' I would earnestly

and affectionately remind you that the decease of your elder brethren, and the perilous crisis through which our Church is now passing, call for increased earnestness, increased unity, increased manifestation of the life and fervour of religion in all your Church-work, whether it be private, pastoral, or social.

The peculiar habits of a country so thinly peopled as this is, and depending so much on hazardous speculation, are very unfavourable to religious thought and religious unity. 'Scattered and peeled,' to use a Scriptural expression, the tendency of the settlers is to separation and deadness of feeling. Often without any literature, feeding solely on the husks of a passing newspaper, or on the unwholesome stimulant of party controversy which they can ill understand, what can we expect but those spasmodic bursts of religious feeling, which supply an electric life for a few weeks, and then sicken, droop, and die away into deadness again? It must be confessed, I think, that, with the highest perception of the sober and sustained majesty of many parts of our Liturgy, and of its comprehensive and attractive petitions, its very freedom from errors of taste requires an educated mind in order thoroughly to enjoy it; and even the condensed force of the collects passes over the heads of uneducated persons, and they do not

'say Amen at our giving of thanks' in the intelligent spirit which the great Apostle recommends. There must, therefore, be the greater need that you should endeavour to call Church-knowledge and life into action; that by schools, by private and public instructions, both in the pulpit and out of it, you should teach your people what is the value of our prayers and services, what they mean, what is their order, how they may be made most conducive to private devotion and family worship; and how a life moulded and regulated by the spirit of our prayers will be a life of piety, honesty, integrity, and purity, of love to God, and love to man, such as no Church on earth need be ashamed of.

The activity of men's minds in the present age leading to inquiry on all subjects, and to different aspects of thought in the most sincere and painstaking inquirers, is not of itself an evil. It is a part of God's Providence, which it is our duty especially to discover, and to see that it imposes on us new, grave, and arduous duties. In former times, clergymen, whether ignorant or not, whether holy men or the reverse, were respected for their office. As the laity did not trouble themselves greatly about the doctrines of religion, they listened to the clergy with respect, even though they were not possessed of much information, nor gifted with the

power of imparting knowledge. The general diffusion of a certain amount of learning, and the special study of sacred subjects by great numbers of the laity, have entirely changed the aspect of things. Many of the laity equal, or even exceed, the clergy in sacred knowledge; many more are masters of subjects connected with Biblical knowledge. History, geography, astronomy, geology, and other kindred sciences, have all been cultivated with an amazing success, and the results have been directed to the field of Biblical literature. The office, the duties, the pastoral work, the public discourses of the clergy, have all been considered by laymen from a layman's point of view, and the freest criticism has been applied to them; and, last of all, the same criticism has been applied to the Sacred Scriptures themselves, both by reverent and irreverent minds. We may lament over, or we may rejoice in, this altered relation; but we cannot 'force the course of a river.' We may, however, certainly use it to subserve our own good designs, and may turn it into many useful channels. What I wish to impress upon you all is, that we are deeply responsible for the manner in which we meet this overpowering tide. To meet it with unmanly lamentations is worse than useless; it is actually sinful, if the new order of things be part of God's providential

government. It is equally useless to meet it with simple denunciation of infidelity. All men who doubt are not infidels. When a subject is presented to us in a new light, we naturally stand in doubt as to which of the two or more aspects of the truth will prove to be correct, and we withhold our assent till our convictions are satisfied. Ignorance and self-conceit often dogmatize, when the wiser and more reverent mind is endeavouring to discover where the truth lies. It must, therefore, be seen by all candid inquirers, that the learning which sufficed for a clergyman fifty years since, will not suffice for him now, if he desires to vindicate the truth, and bring it home to the understandings, as well as to the affections, of his hearers. High-sounding words with no better foundation than our own repeated assertions will show their emptiness in the long run, and the most sincere and pious intentions will not make amends for the want of that which all educated laymen feel that their teacher ought to possess, let him be as pious as he may. Happily, there is no great, certainly no insuperable, difficulty which need prevent a clergyman's acquiring the necessary learning, as there never was a period when a larger number of good and valuable works was more accessible, many of them cheap, as well as good. The 'reading and assiduous

meditation,' which St. Paul enjoins, the 'books and parchments,' which, on the verge of martyrdom, he desired might be brought to him, show that the Apostle, at all events, did not undervalue learning, and that he was a diligent student to the last moment of his life.

But this universal spirit of inquiry is accompanied by a restless inquietness of mind, which is, no doubt, productive of much evil. There is, perhaps, no subject of thought, political, social, civil, or religious, of which it may not be said that the foundations are shaken; and the complexity of the various subjects of controversy renders the mind more uneasily alive to the difficulty of our position. This is much increased, in our own case, by the fact that the Church of England, be it for good or evil, is, on some points, a compromise—an endeavour to find a mean between extremes. In our Articles we find many strong expressions against Roman errors, but we find others equally as strong against very opposite doctrine. The nineteenth Article asserts that 'the Churches of Jerusalem, Alexandria, and Antioch, as also the Church of Rome, have erred;' but the 30th Canon declares that 'it was so far from the purpose of the Church of England to forsake and reject the Churches of Italy, France, Spain, Germany, or any such like Churches, in all things that they held and practised,

that it only departed from them in those particular points, wherein they are fallen from themselves in their ancient integrity, and from the Apostolical Churches, which were their first founders.' How much bitterness might have been spared, if such wise and moderate expressions had ever been the guide of our divines!

In spite of all our declarations against Rome, no Anglican bishop attempts to re-ordain a Roman priest, but invariably ordains a Presbyterian or Wesleyan minister; yet we do not anathematize either the one or the other. The somewhat obscure wording of some of the Articles, and the various changes and revisions of our Liturgy, prove that it was always the desire of our Church to be as comprehensive as possible, short of the sacrifice of what is plainly revealed, and that the different deductions of men's minds from the same text are not only worthy of consideration, but are not always to meet with disallowance on one side or the other, where the matter is obscure, or is not illustrated by catholic consent and universal Christian tradition. In a system like that of the Church of England, standing midway between Rome and Geneva, it must clearly be impossible to insist on absolute uniformity of thought, of action, or of ritual. The whole history of our Church is a history of the failure of the enforcement by law of

absolute uniformity. No sooner was the Reformation launched, than the principal reformers fled from persecution into foreign countries. There, so far from being united, their differences were many, and became embittered; and they returned to England only to open the whole question, or the series of questions, which from that period have troubled and perplexed the English mind. The evils of disunion appeared to be so great, that absolute uniformity was the only remedy that presented itself to some of the governors of the Church; and Archbishop Laud hoped to accomplish this object by a perfect union of Church and State, and by employing the whole power of the State to crush non-conformity. How egregiously he failed, and how both Church and State were brought low in the well-intended, but mistaken, endeavour, every one knows. This great desolation past, and the royal family restored, again a stringent law was passed to effect perfect uniformity. But though partially successful, a large number of ministers with their flocks left out: pale, and bequeathed to posterity rights to be asserted, wrongs to be avenged, and attacks to be incessantly made on the Church favoured and protected by the State. The Church of England, however, remained, in temporals, victorious, and then passed into a condition (at least so it seems

to be generally supposed) of comparative sloth and indifference. From this we were aroused by a loud cry of energy and zeal, proceeding from those who were at first sincerely attached to our Church, yet who certainly broached new opinions, not easily reconcilable with our Prayer Book; yet they protested to their last moments that they lived and died in the Communion of the Church of England. This movement, the force, extent, and duration of which could not be foreseen, was ascribed to an insane enthusiasm. Those in power could neither believe in it, nor appreciate it. Again the sword of uniformity was unsheathed, and again a vast breach was made in our ranks. Thousands left us, and remain to this day destitute of the attachment which their founder had to our Church, and, I fear, with very little wish to return to it.

From this time, it appears to me, from such sources of inquiry as are open to me, that the principle of compulsory uniformity has been practically given up, after the failure of so many attempts to enforce it by the power of the State; men's minds have become accustomed to differ in matters not essential to the faith; and it must be admitted that a very general neglect of the decency and reverence due to the worship of God was the immediate result of a reaction from the attempt

to put down nonconformity with a high hand. That I have not overstated the result is evident, I think, from two practical proofs, which I shall now mention.

If we examine the royal Declaration prefixed to the Thirty-nine Articles, King James says that 'the bishops and clergy, in convocation, shall have license, under our broad seal, to deliberate of, and to do, all such things, as being made plain to them, and assented to by us, shall concern the settled continuance of the Church of England now established, from which we will not endure *any varying or departing in the least degree.*' Again, 'in those curious and unhappy differences that have for so many hundred years, in different times and places, exercised the Church of Christ (here the Declaration seems to include all controversies of doctrine and discipline from the Arian controversy to those connected with Calvin), *we will that all curious search be laid aside.*' How singularly the spirit of the Tudor-descended sovereign seems to speak out here; and how remarkable it is to hear him speak as if not only England, and all Christendom, but the realm and ample domain of the mind of man, lay prostrate at his feet, and at the dread words, 'Le roi s'avisera,' all disputation would be for ever hushed, and that the waves and storms of thought would lie still in everlasting peace.

Yet if a sovereign in our day should express such sentiments, who would pay any attention to them? The whole theory of Tudor government has melted away. We retain the Declaration; and there it stands before the Articles. No one ventures to touch it, but no one believes it, though many of our great divines once proclaimed it, and did their best to maintain it.

I was once present at a meeting of most of the English bishops when the question was discussed whether an address should be presented to Her Majesty to remove from the Prayer Book three of the State services then appended to it, and in use by many of the clergy. A prelate, not now living, remarked that he feared the removal of them would give umbrage to many sincere Protestants. It was drily observed that, probably, the Protestants would not discover that they had been removed, so little regard was generally paid to those services; and the result has proved the general truth of the opinion. The services were expunged without long deliberation, and with less attention. Prayers and applications of Scripture which appeared perfectly appropriate in former times made not the slightest impression on the public mind in our own day; and many seem to be ignorant that these services were ever in their Prayer Books, and certainly feel no regret at their removal.

Yet how vast is the difference implied between our ancestors and ourselves in our tone of thought on these matters!

To take another view of the same subject. If you read the sermons of divines of other days, such as those of Bishop Andrewes, Bishop Sanderson, or Dr. South, valuable as they are in many respects, it would be impossible to preach them when they touch on the relations between Church and State, or on the conduct of dissenters; not only because the relations are entirely altered, but because the statements, if now made, would be perfectly untrue. Our feelings and habits are entirely different, though the letter of our formularies continues to be the same. I draw, therefore, this conclusion, that, constituted as the Church of England is, and must remain, if she continue to be a mean between two powerful and apparently irreconcilable adversaries; unable as she is, by her constitution, to accept the theory of a living, infallible authority on earth, whose word shall be law to every Church, and every member of every Church, it is perfectly chimerical in her to aim at absolute or enforced uniformity either of doctrine or of ritual. Even Roman Catholics have never attained it. Though the decrees of the living Pope are their law, it is clear that the Popes have not

been uniform in their decrees, either on doctrine or ritual; and the vast orders, by means of which the Roman Church has controlled various schools of thought, differ still more widely. If our Church profess to be built on a more popular basis, it is plain that we cannot evade the necessary conclusion, that whether a man be called Low Churchman, High Churchman, or Ritualist, there is comprehensiveness enough in our Church to embrace him, and there ought to be charity enough to make use of his zeal and piety, though as to the means he makes use of to promote the glory of God and the salvation of souls, our conclusions may widely differ.

Another moral I should draw from the historical facts to which I have called your attention is, that Providence has been for three centuries plainly teaching us that the strength of our Church does not lie in its connection with the State; and that when that connection has been closest, the State has been unable to enforce uniformity of teaching and ritual, and the Church has been least prosperous. And if even in England, where the bishops are officially recognized in Parliament, where the majority of the nobility and landed gentry are members of the Church, it is evident, from all the signs of the time, that Establishments have seen their best

days; and that the time will come when a higher and nobler strength, than kings or parliaments can supply, will be needed by Churchmen for the success of their work; how much more is it our duty, my brethren, not to lean on the staff of a broken reed, which will run into our hand and pierce it, but to rest on the broad and strong foundations which our blessed Master marked out for us at first, and on which the Church has rested, under every form of government, in the midst of the severest persecutions, and on which she must chiefly rest, whether the State grant or withdraw its favour. To talk of an established Church in this Province at this time is one of the idlest dreams that could enter into the mind of man. The words found indeed in the Statute Book apply to the time when all officials and most of the colonists were actually Churchmen. Emigration and other causes have reduced that statute to a dead letter; and the legislature, by the admission of all, deals with us exactly on the same footing as with all other religious bodies under the protection of the State. I would not wish it otherwise; for what can be a more invidious and dangerous position, than to be the Church of a small minority, caressed and pampered, and perhaps corrupted by State patronage, whilst all our fellow-Christians, equally worthy of assist

ance with ourselves, are willingly giving their hard-earned money to the building of their churches and schools, and to the support of their clergy, and are denied other assistance or favour. On this ground it may be said that we have paid dearly even for the glebes granted to us by the Crown, which have yielded more odium than profit, and have contributed to foster the injurious suspicion that the clergy of our Church are paid by Government, and have some secret support, of which nobody can give any account. And valuable as has been the aid of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, it is clear to me that whenever a Church is rooted in the affections of its people it ought to sustain its own clergy, to build its own churches, to establish its own schools, and to consider itself as much bound to provide for its spiritual wants as the father of every family is bound to labour for his children's daily bread, and to educate and send them out into the world to make homes for themselves. Where the settlers are poor, and unable to provide the whole salary of a clergyman, their richer brethren should assist in bearing the burden; but it is a shame and a scandal that this burden, after sixty years of assistance, should be laid on charitable people in England, and especially on servants and poor agricultural labourers. It would

have been greatly to our credit had we *volunteered* to take some of this burden on ourselves; this, however, is perhaps not to be expected from human nature; and we naturally cling, as others have done before us, to the dole of good money, and shrink from the trials and privations, to which its withdrawal may expose us. But even if that withdrawal should lead to a temporary abandonment of some missions, I think it would be better to be a real honest Church, of somewhat smaller dimensions, doing our own work, and paying our own way, than to have the mere shadow of an establishment, and to be clinging to a real pauperism, with the affectation of a respectability that does not belong to us. The Society at home has very properly determined that our love for the Church shall be tested. It has withdrawn from us three hundred pounds a-year, and in the beginning of next year it will certainly make a farther reduction; and we must expect that this withdrawal will continue until we are left to maintain our own Church by our own exertions and endowments. I must rely on you all to make this fact as widely known as possible, and to endeavour to show your people how reasonable it is that they should be placed on the same footing with all other bodies of Christians, as the Judicial Committee have said, 'in no better, and in no

worse position.' As to many of you, possibly, accustomed to a different system, and clinging to the memories of earlier days, this may seem a discouraging statement, I shall endeavour to set before you what may be considered reasonable grounds of hope for the time to come.

In looking back to the early history of this Province, one must see that the circumstances, which led to the founding of our Church here, were purely exceptional. The Loyalists took possession with a zeal sharpened by persecution, and full of a determination to preserve to the uttermost the rights of Church and King. They were for the most part vigorous and determined men, and it was considered a proof of disloyalty to be anything else than a Churchman. The power of the government was great; Churchmen filled all the offices of State and reaped the benefit of the connection. From 1786 to 1814, or later, everything seems to have been in their hands, and many went to church, having no places of worship of their own, eady to float securely on the tide of court-favour and emolument. Yet when one narrowly examines the records of those days which remain, the traditions of the period seem to be all of the Georgian, none of them of a primitive and catholic, character. The State Church, the assistance of the

Government, the air of worldly respectability, were much thought of; but the reverent, loving care of God's house, the ready self-denial, and the careful celebration of Christ's Sacraments, were, I fear, too little regarded. At all events, the following facts seem undeniable¹.

From the beginning, there was no daily prayer such as the Scripture speaks of, and the Church orders; celebrations were infrequent; neither baptisms nor marriages were commonly performed in church, as the Prayer Book appoints; fonts there were none; the vessels for the Holy Communion were of the poorest; pews were universally sold at high prices; the poor and the middle classes were alienated by the exclusiveness of the wealthy; burial-grounds were often unconsecrated; episcopal visits were few: how could it be otherwise when the State appointed, at first, one bishop for the two Canadas, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, and Newfoundland? The arrangement of the churches resembled, in all external features, the worst patterns of dissent; and the offerings to the clergy were few. Even at Fredericton, at first, nothing was offered; and, after several years' service, only £30 a-year was promised.

¹ In mentioning these facts, I pass no censure whatever upon the Loyalists. I make no doubt, had we been in their position, we should have felt and acted as they did.

Thus this entire leaning on State assistance would have proved the ruin of the Church, had it continued; and it doubtless injured it in a great degree. There is not one of these points, on which some improvement has not been made, though, unhappily, many still lean on the broken reed of State aid, and do not believe even in themselves, much less in those powers and gifts which our great Master and ascended Lord has granted to His Church, and has never withdrawn from her. Surely, unless we are perfectly infatuated, and blind to every sign of the times, we must see, by all that is daily passing around us, that to lean on the State, or on politicians of any party, or even on the donations of our brethren at a distance, is to proclaim our conviction that the Church in this Province is not worth the pains and trouble by which every religious body in the Province, save our own, defends, supports, and maintains its own religious convictions.

But to pass to another and important subject. You may, naturally, expect something from me on the subject of the Lambeth Conference, and on the reasons which prevented my attendance at that great assembly. I may say, therefore, first, that had his Grace the Archbishop required my presence as a matter of dutiful obedience, I should, without delay, have complied with

his command. The subject coming before me, however, through his kindness and consideration, in another form, it was left to me to judge whether I deemed it desirable to attend or not. At the time fixed for the Conference, I had issued notices for many confirmations, and the clergy had prepared their candidates; and I was unwilling, without very strong reasons, to postpone such confirmations, as I must have done, for a whole year. Further, with the utmost deference to the wiser judgment of the bishops who urged his Grace to summon that assembly, it appeared to me that in consideration of the vast distance from England of many of the colonial dioceses, and the grave importance of the step contemplated, a longer time should have been allowed to give the matters selected for deliberation full consideration, and to obtain, if possible, the judgment of the colonial bishops generally, and of their clergy (and indeed of the laity also, if the decrees of that council were intended to carry with them the force of general consent), on the subjects calling for the judgment of so august an assembly.

Looking back to the first great council of the Church, I see it stated in the Inspired Word, that in a time of great anxiety and much discussion on points partly ceremonial, and partly doctrinal, not the Apostles only,

but 'the Apostles and elders came together to consider of this matter;' so that the second order in the ministry was not excluded from the deliberation. What part the laity took in the matter is not clear; but it is certain that the final decree was adopted with their consent, being issued in the name of the 'Apostles, elders, and brethren,' and that 'the whole multitude' were listeners to the addresses of the Apostles. I am well aware that what was perfectly practicable at that early period, when the members of the Church were few, may at the present time be practically impossible. But I see no insuperable difficulty in collecting within a reasonable time the judgments of the colonial dioceses on any given subject, before proceeding to a more full discussion of it by the general assembly. Above all, it appeared to me unwise to gather together from the ends of the earth bishops of the Anglican communion, some belonging to an established Church, some to a Church partially connected with the State or in a very anomalous position, and some to a Church wholly unconnected with the State, without distinctly stating the purpose for which we were called together, and the subjects to be considered. Grave reasons, the force of which I do not presume to impugn, may have prevented this course from being adopted; but I am obliged frankly to con-

fess to you (with the possibility that some of you may think me mistaken) that when no subject whatever was named for discussion, and when only three days were allotted for deliberation, according to the notice first given, I deemed it impossible that in so short a time a large body could come to a satisfactory conclusion on points, with regard to which the members of our Church throughout the world might well look for wise counsel from the whole assembled episcopate.

That my apprehensions were not without foundation appears to me from the fact that can hardly be disputed, that the encyclical letter, which I gladly signed, to avoid even the appearance of disunion, contained little beyond what we all profess to believe and teach, expressed in general terms, and did not in any way touch or attempt to settle, as the first council of the Church clearly did settle, disputed questions of ceremonial or of doctrine.

Admitting that some of these points might be unlikely to be settled by such an assembly at one meeting, one point there was apparently ripe for deliberation; and if that matter had been appointed for consideration, nothing would have prevented me from joining the conference. I allude of course to the unhappy position of the Church in Natal, placed under the supervision of

a bishop who has openly impugned the genuineness and authenticity of certain books of Holy Scripture; who denies (in his work on the Epistle to the Romans) both the eternal punishment of the wicked, and the security of the happiness of the righteous (thereby, as I conceive, impugning the truth of our Lord's words); who is said to have taught, that our Lord is not a proper object of worship; and who has been requested by the general voice of the English episcopate to resign his see.

I do not deny that there are legal questions relative to the temporal position of such a bishop, which the assembled episcopate need not, and might not be competent to discuss. But I should fearlessly maintain that it can never be said of any Christian Church, that it is its duty to leave the consideration of all spiritual questions to the civil power; or that, if legal and spiritual questions are unfortunately mingled together, the Church can be absolved of participation in the sin of heresy, if she does not openly, distinctly, and by all legitimate methods, declare that she will not hold communion with any one, especially with a pastor, who denies any of the fundamental principles of Christianity. If there be one principle common to all Christians throughout the world from the very first, it

is 'that all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father.' Consequently, if we worship the one, we must worship the other. How, then, can we admit to communion one who denies both? 'for he that denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father.' Considering that the last words of our Lord from heaven commend a bishop of the Church for reprov^{ing} heresy, and censure another bishop for suffering it, I look with fear and trembling, not at the trial of Bishop Colenso, but at the trial, before God and the world, of the Anglican Church.

It must be recollected, that if anything can be safely said of the Anglican Church, it is that it has never been contented with defensive teaching. Its whole aspect, since the Reformation, has been controversial, and anti-Roman. The one object of the incessant attacks of most of its members of all parties, is the Pope of Rome. Many of its divines seem incapable of preaching a sermon on any subject without some hard names given to Roman Catholics. Is all this zeal, then, to expend its force on one form of error? Whatever Roman Catholics may have added to the old faith, at all events they believe, in common with ourselves, in the fall of man, in our redemption by Christ, in the genuineness and authenticity of the canonical books, in the eternal

punishment of the cursed and the secured happiness of the blessed, in the Trinity in Unity, and the worship due to Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. In these fundamentals we are in union with them, and because we disagree in other and important points with the Roman Church, are we to allow one who denies that which is common to all Christians to be considered in full communion with us, whilst we repel those who are guilty of no such blasphemy? This is no question, be it observed, of the legal title, and temporal status, and salary of the offender; it is a question of the very foundation of all Christian teaching.

The question is this: Can we communicate with our Lord and adore Him at the same table with those who deny Him? If we can, I see no reason for withholding Christian communion from the Mahomedan and the Jew. But if this be unscriptural and anti-Christian, then it seems to me that a more necessary subject could hardly be imagined for a collected body of Anglican Bishops, than the proof that such accusations are true, and the steps which should be taken, if they be true, to purge ourselves from all participation in such errors. Further, I fear, lest by refusing to deliberate on so awful a subject, and by throwing all the burden on the civil power, we may be held guilty of placing the

spiritual powers of Christ's Church in abeyance, and of laying the truths of the Christian revelation under the feet of the world, and of representing them as secondary to the temporal accidents of worldly fortune and position. I think that the question of communion with Bishop Colenso may be properly separated from the mode of trial to which he has been subjected. The powers of a Metropolitan in the English Church have been so seldom called into exercise against a Suffragan, the mode of trial has been so little defined, and the authority of general canon law is so confessedly difficult a question, that I should have been thankful to have had my knowledge on these points enlarged, and the question of the regularity or irregularity of that trial thoroughly discussed. But be that trial perfectly regular, fair, unexceptional; or be it, as a learned prelate maintains, irregular and exceptionable, it appears to me that difficulties in the way of trial and deposition, or error in what has been done, if there be error, do not absolve the English Church from the sin of communicating with a declared heretic, and that this heresy appears to be contained in the printed books, which the author neither denies nor retracts. If after we had cleared ourselves by our public acts, the law should step in, and prevent trial and deposition by the Metropolitan, or it

should appear that the trial had been irregular, let the law, or the offender against law, bear that burden, or let the State be answerable. Our souls are free.

With these opinions on the subject, which I dare not conceal, and which have not been hastily formed, I felt that the conference had put aside the one point which called for their immediate deliberation; and though a declaration on the subject was signed by many bishops present, it was not the official act of the whole body, nor of a majority of the body.

Unless, however, I am very much mistaken in reading the signs of the times, the day is not far distant when the English Church must learn to lean less on the temporal accidents of its position, and more on the support which it may reasonably hope for from the spiritual power entrusted to it by its great Head. For it can hardly be expected that a nation which allows an established Episcopal Church in England, an established Presbyterian Church and an unestablished Episcopal Church in Scotland, an unendowed and unestablished Roman Church in Ireland, and several powerful bodies of Christians leagued together in opposition to all establishments in the three countries, can maintain, with any show of reason, or with general satisfaction, that the Church

of England is established, because she, and she alone, teaches the truth of God. This is a position which the nation, as a nation, expressing the national voice in the national councils, would clearly shrink from maintaining, and which, however theoretically supported by our older divines, is found to be more and more untenable in practice since the days of William the Third.

Looking at the matter from a national point of view only, I fear that such a statement is nothing but a fiction, however agreeable a fiction it may be; and whilst I would not willingly move a stone of the present establishment, I should be sorry to risk the progress of the Christian faith on what formed no part of our Lord's original foundation of His Church. But I am entering, perhaps, into a field too wide for my duty; and, therefore, I will pass on to speak of what concerns us so nearly—the position in which the Church finds itself in our own little Province.

Up to a very late period many among us, perhaps the majority, supposed that we were part and parcel of the Established Church of England and Ireland, and that the Church was established in New Brunswick. This not unnatural supposition was supported first, by finding the words 'established Church' applied

to our Church in the provincial statutes; secondly, by the grants of land made to our parishes by the Crown, in consequence of which the representative of the Crown has hitherto presented to all our benefices; thirdly, by the general appointment of Englishmen to our missions; fourthly, by the support given by the Venerable Society to our clergy; and, lastly, by the notion generally entertained, that an Englishman carries with him all the ecclesiastical law of England, wherever he goes. This pleasant fiction it is time that every one should abandon, as it has been demolished by the inexorable logic of facts. The legislature of this country has not ordered the words 'established Church' to be erased from the Statute Book, but it deals with our Church on the same terms as with every other religious body. Grants of land, which have been also made to other bodies besides ourselves, remain, but the general wishes of our people are evidently averse to the appointment to benefices remaining in the hands of the representative of the Crown. The appointment of Englishmen only to missions has been reversed under my Episcopate; and the majority of the clergy consists now of persons born in the colonies. The support given by the Society is being gradually and permanently withdrawn; and the highest judicial

court known to the realm has declared that 'in all colonies in which there is an independent legislature, we are in no better position than any other religious body, and in no worse.' It seems now to be generally admitted among us that there is no established Church here in the sense in which there is an established Church in England. But the State has gone further than this. It has declared that the bishop's letters patent must not be taken as conveying the coercive jurisdiction which they professed to convey, and it has left to the bishop the title which the Queen conferred upon him, the incidents of a corporation, and an undefined spiritual and pastoral care. Such being the facts, which can hardly be denied, what is our relation to the mother Church, or by what bonds are we connected with it? I should answer, by stronger bonds than kings or parliaments can supply. History does not teach us, especially Church history, that nations and countries are preserved in their faith solely by courts of law. The three great Creeds were not framed by lawyers, nor were they debated in parliaments. The canonical books of Scripture were not settled by jurists. Though our Church has been called, in derision, a Parliamentary Church, its liturgy is derived from very different sources; and though the

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Parliament ratified the Thirty-nine Articles, it did not frame them. Courts of law did not prevent the success of the designs of Philip and Alva on the Low Countries, nor of James the Second on the Protestants of England. So long, therefore, as the reformed Church of England at home, and her branches abroad, acknowledge the same standards of faith and practice, we shall be united by the same bonds which knit our forefathers in communion, though the accidents of an establishment may not remain.

If there be any doubt or suspicion on this head, ought not all reasonable men to be willing to learn from experience; for is there any safer or more trustworthy guide? It is now more than eighty years since the United States became independent. The breach between the mother and the child took place under manifestations of exceeding bitterness towards the Church of England, for almost all Churchmen were on the side of the king's government; yet, notwithstanding that severance, and the total disruption of all connection between the two countries, the Episcopal Church has grown up, perfectly independent, except that she received her episcopacy through Scotland and England, that is, from one Church unestablished, and from another established; and yet in spite of so many circum-

stances adverse to union, the Church of the United States is in closer bonds of communion with the Church of England than ever. Prelates and presbyters meet on equal terms in both countries; our general conditions of communion are the same; our Prayer Book and Articles, in the most important respects, are the same; and all this without one court of law or one act of parliament having any influence on the matter. With this remarkable fact lying at our very doors, why should we imagine it a work of great difficulty, in a colony, where it is to be hoped that no such temporal difficulties will occur again, to preserve the spiritual union between the mother Church and our own? Or why should we imagine that on an appeal to the decrees of the Privy Council our whole faith and our entire spiritual condition depends? It seems to show very little reliance in ourselves if we cannot hope to be, at least, as loyal to the Prayer Book as the republicans of the United States. Monarchy and the decrees of the judicial courts have done nothing to retain them in their spiritual allegiance. We have, again, a like experience on the British territory. All the dioceses of Canada, without any question of party, have accepted the situation; have acknowledged that there is a distinction between their temporal position

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and that of the mother Church. Colonial acts, ratified by the Imperial government, have ensured to them entire freedom; the law officers of the Crown have refused to advise the Queen to issue a mandate for the consecration of a bishop there; and they have all, without one exception, framed such rules and regulations as tend to keep them in union with the doctrines and rules of the mother Church. Where there is so large a field of experience open to us, on both sides, shall we learn nothing from it? Shall we allow mere suspicion of unworthy motives to override all the teaching of facts? Supposing it were the design of any one or more bishops, or any number of clergy, to destroy the doctrine of their Church, or to tyrannize over the consciences of any of their brethren, could they have invented a more preposterous plan than to call together representatives of all the clergy and laity elected annually for this purpose? The bishop, who presides over the synod, is but one amongst many, and he has no legislative power. Even if the clergy were willing to forge chains for their own thralldom, the laity, who have equal votes, may surely be trusted to preserve liberty. But if neither clergy nor laity can be trusted, in what a helpless state of imbecility and ignorance does this yoke of tyranny on the part of the bishops

suppose clergy and laity to be? The whole, however, is a mere illusion, contradicted by all the known facts of the case, and grounded on the meanest and most unworthy suspicion of others. I shall, therefore, close my remarks on what seems, by some, to be still regarded with an inveterate and unworthy distrust, which I do not pretend to understand, with the following plain intimation of what I believe would be the result if the diocese should refuse to submit to synodical action.

1st. We should be no nearer a temporal connection with the Church of England than we are at present. What prudent person can fail to see that the Church of England will, probably, in a few years, be less closely connected with the State than she is now? Every new legislative measure, such as the proposed abandonment of church rates, the disestablishment of the Irish and now of the West Indian Church, tends in that direction. Whether these measures become the law of the land or not in this year, the animus of the measures, supported by large majorities, it is impossible to mistake; and there is every reason to apprehend that a reformed House of Commons will proceed faster, rather than slower, in the same direction. The same general tendency of opinion is directed to the colonies, and expresses itself by the

distinct declarations of the highest legal authorities, to the effect that powers supposed to be vested in bishops have no legal existence; that we are not an established Church; that we are in no better position, as regards the law, than any other religious body in the Province; in fact, the plain English of it is, that we must shift for ourselves, rely on our own exertions, and make our own rules of discipline; and that so long as we do not contravene the civil law, and keep within the letters of the rubrics of our Prayer Book, neither parliaments nor courts of law will interfere with our freedom of action.

Now, after all, if we possess any energetic and independent spirit, is this an unfavourable position? Very far from it. We have advantages, far greater than the Church in the United States ever had, to begin with, and we have not the odium resting on us of having been on the losing side in a bitter political struggle. We have their energy and prudence before us; and the example of our brethren, under the same monarchy, to guide us; and we have no feeling to contend with on the part of bishops, clergy, or laity, for separation from the mother Church, but rather for a close and permanent union. What phantom is it, then, that we are so afraid of?

But, further, if the diocese refuse to petition for the incorporation of a synod, we have no discipline, no legitimate rules of action. The provincial statutes are worse than useless, and the English law is not applicable here. Oaths and vows are, indeed, always binding on men of honour; but the Church requires that offenders should be dealt with by law. Persons accused ought not to be condemned by the Press before they are heard: justice requires that the accusation should be substantiated by witnesses; and that after lawful trial, and sufficient proof of guilt, sentence should be pronounced by a proper officer. We all admit the propriety of this method in our courts of law. Are we so devoid of understanding, that rules cannot be framed in the Church which will ensure the punishment of guilt, and yet protect the person of the offender from tyranny? It is next to impossible that, in a duly constituted synod, a bishop should ever play the tyrant; for he must obtain the consent of a majority of both orders; and in any important matter, the vote would always be taken by orders, not by a bare majority of votes. The question is, whether you will have the decision of the whole Church represented by her communicants, lay as well as clerical, or whether you will submit to

the dictation of a few irresponsible persons, assuming powers which the Church has not given them, and denouncing every one who dares to differ from them. For twenty years I have refused, on principle, to submit to this; for twenty years I have borne accusations and insinuations in silence, and have rested my justification on the good sense and good feeling of the whole diocese. If the clergy and laity think me in error, they have abundant opportunities for making their sentiments known. But I can calmly, though humbly, appeal to my own conscience, and to the just sentence of One who will hereafter render judgment and justice to all, without respect of persons, that I have not sought to crush, by the strong arm of power, those whose opinions differ from my own; that I have conferred benefices and honours on those who gave no support to my own views of truth: and if I have done this when I was in a position of greater independence, I must be less likely to do mischief when met by the strong check of continual public discussion. However, it is for the diocese, not for me personally, to wish for the establishment of a synod. No man, as he grows old, desires more labour and trouble; and if it be generally distasteful, I can live very well without it. It is the diocese that will be shut out

of a common bond of brotherhood, and deprived of the advantages that accrue from common consultation, and mutual co-operation in a large field. With England we are likely to have less, rather than more, communication of this nature.

There is one other point which I cannot wholly pass by, but on which it cannot be expected from me that my words should be many. In all the dioceses of the United States, in Canada, and in many other colonial sees throughout the world, provision is made for the election of a bishop. In our case, everything at present is left to chance. We cannot tell whether the Queen would appoint. We are sure that there is no lawfully constituted body to make known your wishes, and the wishes of the laity; and the only thing that seems certain at present is a lamentable confusion, and possibly a tumultuous and hasty decision. Whether this be your wish in such a case, yourselves must determine. In such an event, my spirit may be far from the conflicts and passions of earth, and my voice and counsel may be alike powerless to assist you. But for the sake of the Church which I have loved, the brethren on whom I have laid my hands, and the congregation which I have served, I pray God to preserve you from the evils of a hasty, tumultuous, and ill-

considered choice. If there be anything that should be done 'decently and in order,' surely it must be the election of the Bishop who is to preside over you all. The very mention of such an occurrence reminds me that as it is not likely that all here assembled will meet again at another visitation, I should take leave of you now with words of earnest love for your common spiritual welfare. If you value my counsel, if you seek the common peace and growth of our small and scattered flocks, you will not perpetually cast abroad the firebrands of controversy and strife in our own communion. A politician of great ability, but bound by no tie to our Church, has lately said in his place in the House of Commons, that the English establishment might last for ages if it were not for her own internal dissensions; and such words, proceeding from such a source, may well be considered as a timely, if not a providential, warning; and if they may be so regarded by a powerful, well-endowed body, whose roots have struck deep into the English heart, which has the tenacity of one of its own venerable oaks to sustain it, how much more impressive should the warning be to us, who are more like exotics than trees home-born in the soil, and of whom it has been said by an authority, possessed of some keenness of observation,

—whether truly or not, I do not pretend to say,—that the genius of the people at large in this country is not favourable to the growth of the religion of the Church of England. Be this as it may, there can be no reasonable doubt in the mind of any prudent person, that we need all the energy, all the wisdom, all the learning, all the forbearance, all the unity of purpose that we can summon to our aid, to make us to stand at all, amidst the conflicting elements which surround us. Every lawful and Christian means you can devise is required to keep our flocks from wandering, to teach and attract the young, to fill their minds with catholic truth, with sober, sound theology, to render them loyal and dutiful to their baptismal covenant, and to induce them to remain steadfast in Apostolic doctrine and fellowship, sound in faith and holy in life. Our disunion will never promote their unity. Our mutual recriminations will never increase their attachment. And our perpetual attacks on the most numerous body of Christians in the Province will never make us a strong, united Church. This plan has been tried long enough in Ireland to prove itself a total failure; and what converts have we ever made to our communion in this Province by incessant denunciations of the Church of Rome, or by stirring up suspicion amongst the brethren?

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If instead of attending to the great Apostle's advice, to make known the message of good-will entrusted to us, 'by pureness, by knowledge, by long-suffering, by kindness, by love unfeigned,' we 'bite and devour one another,' assuredly we shall be 'consumed one of another.'

We may ring the changes on Romanism, Ritualism, and Infidelity every day of our lives; but while we thus live in the spirit of bitter controversy, our inner life will decay, and love to God and love to our neighbour will fade away from our hearts. God grant I may never live to see the day, when it shall be said to the Church of New Brunswick, as it was said to Churches planted by Apostolic hands and watered by Apostolic prayers, 'God hath numbered thy kingdom and finished it; thou art weighed in the balances and art found wanting.'

*Extract from the Records of the Synod of the
Diocese of Fredericton, dated July 2, 1868.*

‘RESOLVED, That this Synod fully concurs in the sentence of excommunication passed on Dr. Colenso; and solemnly declares that the Church in this diocese is not in communion with him.’

Passed unanimously.

